

ETS- NR-441561-3

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Indian Ambassador Jha
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

DATE & TIME: February 11, 1972; 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Dr. Kissinger's Office

The lunch took place at my invitation and was designed to keep India quiet while we were in China, as well as to explore the possibilities of starting a serious dialogue.

I told Jha that the beginning of wisdom in our relations was to mute the debate, and also for him to stop playing to the American press with untruthful stories. Jha asked me what I meant. I said that I noted that he must have spoken to Tom Braden about the claim that if India and Pakistan got to war and China intervened we would not come to the defense of India. I said that Jha knew very well that this was not my view, and indeed I had stated the contrary. Jha said he was under the impression that I had said we would help India only if India were attacked. I said that Jha knew very well that I had said that there were three possibilities: First, if Pakistan attacked India, we would come to the assistance of India if China intervened. The second possibility was that China would invade India, in which case we would help India. The third possibility was Chinese intervention in an India-Pakistan war that India had started; in that case, we would not come to the assistance of India. Jha said there had been a genuine misunderstanding. I doubt it.

Secondly, I said, the Indian press should stop its attacks on our policy, and it could prove its good will by taking it easy on the President's State of the World message. Jha said that he had already received my telephone suggestion to that effect and had taken energetic steps in that direction. I might have noticed that no Indian paper commented on the charge that India had planned to attack West Pakistan even though that was a very sore point in India.

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I said the main problem now was to look to the future. The President was certainly prepared to establish a realistic relationship. In fact it might appear that recent events had been a blessing, because they enabled our countries to make a new start. India would take the United States less for granted; the United States could give up its sentimentalization of India. Jha said in principle he agreed and he was sure his Government would agree.

He then asked me how we would handle economic aid in this context. I said the economic aid question should come later in the dialogue; first we should define where we are going. Jha suggested that the best way for handling economic aid was to agree on a program for phasing it out; perhaps in that context it would be easier to start the aid program again. I told Jha that as our discussions developed I was certainly prepared to look into this.

I told Jha that the offer I had made last summer in India that Haksar come over periodically for a frank exchange of views was still open, and maybe this was a good time to give it effect. Jha said he would report to New Delhi and let me know as soon as I returned.

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